civic service, community action is relying upon generations of potential citizen supporters and participants who have had little, if any, training in concepts of civic action and social entrepreneurship. These generations are distant enough from the 1960s civil rights history that they do not have experiential or even parental input about the importance of community action; in addition, they have been inundated, through education and media, with individualistic market-based education principles. Their technological exposure and social stresses have made them both restless with the status quo and resistant to organized change. At the same time that community action is pressed for the financial resources to attract these generations and mobilize their energy, community action is also in dire need of the sensibilities, media savvy, and peculiarly hyper spirit of these younger generations.

At the same time, military service is increasingly consuming the community resources of low-income neighborhoods, with women leaving their communities at a higher rate than ever before. Low-income U.S. communities face multiple challenges. Those community residents returning from military duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, are in need of social services, acknowledgement of their sacrifices, and a feeling of social connectedness. Women who return from military service may have concerns related to their children's welfare during their absence. Industrialized women from various cultural backgrounds also may have special needs.

Finally, community action is also facing an exciting challenge as more women internationally attain positions of formal leadership in the political, private, public, and nonprofit arenas. New opportunities center on the inclusion of contemporary feminized concepts of community, action, and leadership. Community action, with its historical roots in the war on poverty, is challenged to attract support from citizens leery of the utilization of violent rhetoric and divisive metaphors and searching for new approaches that unite advocacy around holistic concepts and experiences.

—*Angela K. Frusciante*

See also Activism, Social and Political; Coalition Building; Community Organizing; Great Society; Income Inequality

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COMMUNITY-BASED ECOLOGICAL RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS

Community-based ecological resistance movements emerge within struggles against environmental degradation that disturbs the symbiotic relationship between community and environment. These movements are devoted to the prevention of community life from environmentally harmful activities and to the investigation of means to mobilize local capabilities in resisting these activities. The awareness that the community lives with and within the environment is the key factor in the political mobilization of community members. The constitutive elements of these movements—such as the aim, perceived threat, organizational structure, activists, and activists' demands, targets, resistance strategies, and tactics—are articulated into a political project to protect community-environment interactions in a particular locality. With this political project, community-based ecological resistance movements differ from various types of environmental movements, such as single-issue local movements, nature conservationist movements, and mainstream environmental movements.

The characteristic aim of community-based ecological resistance movements is to protect and sustain the symbiotic relationship between community and the

constitutive environment. As community members do not see their community and the particular environment they engage with as separate entities, the political demand around which they mobilize is to save both rather than one or the other. Ecological resistance generally communicates through a language of communal self-determination concerned with the socio-natural reproduction of the community. The counterhegemonic discourse articulates a denotative narrative based on legal community rights expressed as an integral part of the community. So, when a small indigenous community in a rural and impoverished region wages its struggle against a multinational logging activity giving rise to environmental conflicts, the discursive aim is readily knitted around ancestral rights and tribal customs. But, in another place, an urban community of middle-class inhabitants living in a highly complex social context and facing the threat of a harmful industrial activity integrates civic rights discourse with the similar aim of defending their way of life.

The environment is not conceived as raw materials and sinks in the service of capital accumulation, as in developmentalist claims manifesting themselves in harmful industrial activities. Instead, activists' claim about the same environment is based on its significance for the spiritual, cultural, social, and economic life of their communities. Thus, a general discursive justification for establishing a resistance strategy lies in the dependence of community existence on various aspects of the environment. It is a strategy for self-defense. In all resistance cases, ecologically unsound activities or projects are regarded as having detrimental effects on the integrity of community life inseparable from the quality of the environment. The perceived threat is a threat to this integrity. It is not merely the actual forms of air, water, and land pollution or that of the destruction of flora and fauna that pave the way for a reflexive and reactive movement of a community; community activism also arises in response to the potential ecological threats of proposed projects. A perceived threat, as such, prompts a spontaneous direct resistance movement aimed at defending and protecting the community's well-being.

Environment-related claims are of paramount importance in mobilizing communities against a threat, but environmental orientation does not thoroughly determine these movements, as is the case where anthropocentric or ecocentric thought shapes the identity of environmental movements. Because human-environment interactions are addressed in a relational/coexistential manner, activists of community-based ecological resistance movements have to reject dualist views emphasizing that nature and humankind are on two different planes. They use and transform the natural world for the necessities of community life, but they do not treat nature in an instrumentalist manner; instead, they show respect and care for nature.

Other significant differences between mainstream environmentalism and community-based ecological resistance movements are found in participant features and organizational structure. Unlike mainstream environmentalism based on a particular kind of institutionalization fostered by expert knowledge, ecological resistance movements rely mainly on community activism, local leaders, and resources. However, exchanges, solidarity bonds, and alliances are forged with similar local movements and national or international environmental organizations in order to make the local conflict a public issue by geographically expanding the position of resistance. Almost all members of the community, including children and elders, are active participants in an ecological resistance movement. Depending on the major economic activity of the community, the class origin of the participants might vary from peasantry to the middle classes. A relatively low level of class differentiation in the community is conducive to wider community participation. While it can be argued that communal relationships have been undermined in the face of modernization and globalization, organic ties among the members of the community still develop, albeit in unconventional resistance patterns. The shared views about the community's predicament, the threat, its causes, and consequences are the cement binding the members of the community together in the movement. There is a broad consensus of opinion among activists that outsiders in collaboration with the State are, for their short-term profits, abusing and destroying that which the community is dependent on, that is, respect and values.

The tactics employed by activists in community-based ecological resistance movements range from usually militant and sometimes illegal forms to nonviolent, peaceful, and legal ones, such as press conferences, petitions, lobbying, civil disobedience, demonstrations, meetings, marches, road blockades, and sit-ins. A massive involvement of community members in all of these actions demonstrates the degree of large-scale resistance and determination. By having recourse to these actions, activists are not calling for an improved environmental policy at the local or national level but rather the withdrawal of outsiders from the locality where the outsiders are acting in opposition to the will of the community. Though it is a long and expensive way, activists also use the tactic of legal actions by filing administrative appeals and lawsuits. Taking legal actions usually helps exert the pressure of the law on administrative authorities or corporations responsible for harmful industrial activities. In some cases, the cessation of these activities appears as a result of activists' judicial struggles as well as their direct actions.

Some examples of such movements in rural and urban settings around the world are the Mǔǎng fǎǎi farmers' movement against logging in Thailand; the Penan people's movement against logging in Malaysia; the village movements against the construction of infrastructure facilities in Mexico, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua; the U.S. movements against coal mining in eastern Kentucky, against the proposed zinc-copper mine in Crandon, Wisconsin, and against the proposed solid-waste incinerator in south-central Los Angeles; the Chipko, Appiko, and Bastar movements against forest destruction; the movement against the Narmada dam project in India; and the movements against a sewage treatment plant, a toxics storage-treatment facility, and a geothermal power plant in rural Greece.

The Bergama movement in Turkey is an interesting example in this respect. The villagers' resistance was against a noxious gold mining investment by a multinational corporation in the small town of Bergama. Heavily engaged in agriculture, they saw the mine as a threat to community life, the environment, and future generations. The early mobilizations took the form of meetings, panels, press conferences, and petition campaigns to declare their opposition. The movement was sparked off in the mid-1990s when 5,000 community members blocked the main road connecting two big cities to protest the felling of thousands of olive trees for the open pit operation. As the corporation (backed by the Turkish government) insisted on putting the mine into operation, the community persisted with the demand for the cessation of its activities by employing confrontational tactics not only in their region but also in other cities of the country in the following years. They also took legal actions against the government authorities that issued mining permits and allowed the corporation to commence gold extraction. Despite the court decisions emphasizing the right to healthy living and a healthy environment, the mining activity continued while the villagers' struggle went on in the court and on the streets. Gold mining was politicized at the national level through these direct and legal actions. Alliances and connections with professional organizations, environmentalist groups, trade unions, and human rights activists helped the movement to make the local conflict a national issue, as well as providing movement leaders with expert knowledge and technical assistance. The struggle also politicized the community by opening up a new political participation channel, as almost all community members with no previous experience in any political activism except voting became committed activists to defend the community-environment symbiosis.

—*Aykut Coban and Mehmet Yetis*

See also Civil Disobedience; Community Organizing; Environmental Movement; Environmental Racism; Indigenous People and Environmentalism; Resistance; Save Narmada Movement; Strategies and Tactics in Social Movements

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COMMUNITY CURRENCIES

Community currencies have emerged as a means to empower the economically marginalized and to build social capital. This alternative social movement, comprised of autonomous, local systems, has proliferated in the past two decades. While all local currencies differ, each is premised on an alternative currency as a medium for the exchange of services and goods. Unlike conventional bartering (where two actors trade directly with one another), local currencies expand commerce by connecting a network of people (and often businesses). The provider of a service or good receives credit in the form of the community currency that can be used for making purchases from other participants in the system.

There are three notable systems in operation: Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS), time banks, and hours systems. LETS (originating in British Columbia in 1983) have been the most widespread form of local currencies. Although LETS have never been widely pursued in the United States, there have been an estimated 1,500 LETS groups in 39 countries. Yet, researchers have concluded that LETS activity peaked in the mid-1990s and that a substantial proportion of LETS are no longer operating.

The Time Dollar Network was launched in 1983 in Miami, Florida, as a diverse and flexible program to formalize volunteering among the socially marginalized, that is, the young, the elderly, the poor, and the disabled. Whereas some of these programs are part of existing organizations, others are independent, alternative economies (e.g., LETS). These local currencies, now known as "time banking," continue to expand in the United Kingdom (where there are 80 active banks and more than 25 in development) and the United States (where there are over 40 programs).

In 1991, an activist in Ithaca, New York, started Ithaca Hours, a printed local currency. This paper format makes Ithaca Hours quite different than LETS and time banks. The latter require substantial coordination and organization as every transaction is accounted for. With paper notes, neither computerized accounting system nor accountant is needed. Since Ithaca Hours was founded, 82 communities in the United States have replicated the model. However, only about 20% of these systems are currently active.

Researchers have identified several major areas of difficulty that community currencies face. They include the recruitment of dedicated administrators, the continual recruitment of participants, redundant listings and the lack of useful services available in the systems, and insufficient resources to administer the systems.

Considering the movement as a whole, it is evident that LETS and hours systems have been less successful in surviving than time banks. The success of the latter is at least partially attributable to the fact that they tend to formally employ staff to broker exchanges, and they are often based in existing organizations. Participants in time banks differ to some extent from those in LETS and hours systems too. Whereas LETS and hour systems are favored by educated, alternative, and progressive people, time banks tend to be used more by the elderly and the poor. Although all of these efforts can be considered community currencies, it is clear that there are substantial differences in the actual practices.

—*Ed Collom*

See also Alternative Movements; Community Organizing

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